

Notice of Allowability	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/987,380	MIMURA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Hai C Pham	2861	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS. This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. This communication is responsive to Amendment filed 01/07/04.
2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 9-11, 13 and 14.
3. The drawings filed on 04 January 2001 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some* c) None of the:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____ |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____ | 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance |
| | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____. |

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

1. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: claim 9 is patentable because of the specific mark forming method wherein a mask is formed on the surface of plating layers previously deposited on a base, the mark is provided as a concave or concavo-convex portion on the surface of the plating layers by laser marking, which penetrates the mask, and a paint or ink is used to apply a color to the mark before the mask is removed from the plating layer surface. This serves to obtain a colored mark without bleeding of ink or paint, which is not found taught or fairly suggested by the prior art of record considered alone or in combination.

Claims 10, 11, 13 and 14 are allowed because they are directly or indirectly dependent from claim 9 above.

The most pertinent prior art made of record, Peterman et al. (U.S. 5,006,207) teaches a method of decorating an expansive surface of a metallic plumbing fixture including the steps of plating the expansive surface with one or more initial finish layers, providing a mask to adhere removably on the surface of the plating layers, forming marks in the unmasked portions by removing all the finish layers, thereby to cause the unmasked portions to contrast in color with the initial finish when the mask is removed. However, Peterman et al. fails to teach the step of coloring the mark with an ink or paint before removing the mask so as to form color contrast between the plating layers and the colored mark, and the plating layer removing step being performed with a laser marking.

Ushijima (U.S. 4,400,252) teaches a method for manufacturing metal decorative panel having colored depressions, wherein the method includes the step of forming a mask consisting of a resist layer on the surface of the metal base, exposing the resist layer to light through a patterned mask to etch the metal substrate to provide concave portions, depositing a paint or dye resin into the concave portions, and removing the resist layer to reveal the metal substrate with the deposited paint layer. Ushijima fails to teach the provision of the plating layers and mark being formed onto the plating layers.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

2. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hai C Pham whose telephone number is (571) 272-2260. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30AM - 5:30PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Stephen D Meier can be reached on (571) 272-2149. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



HAI PHAM
PRIMARY EXAMINER

March 23, 2004